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IN THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the seven (7) drawing sheets showing Figs. 1 – 11b with the attached nine (9) “Replacement Sheet” drawing sheets showing Figs. 1 – 11b. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added.

Figs. 1 – 11b have been amended consistent with comments noted in the PTO-948 issued in the instant Final Office Action. All reference numbers/letters with an asterisk have been changed to ^A.

REMARKS

Summary of the Amendment

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 1-18, 20-49, 51 and 53 will have been canceled and claims 53 - 60 will have been added. Accordingly, claims 53-60 will be pending with claim 53 being in independent form. Claims 22-36, 38-39, 41-46, 49 and 52 were withdrawn by the Examiner.

Summary of the Official Action

In the instant Office Action, the Examiner reiterated the previous restriction requirement withdrew new claim 52 from examination. The Examiner also indicated that a certain English language Abstract, i.e., English language Abstract for DE 200 15 848.1, cited on a form PTO-1449 was not considered because the Examiner did not have a copy of this Abstract. Additionally, the Examiner objected to the drawings based on the attached for PTO-948 and to each of the pending claims on the basis of asserted informalities. The Examiner also rejected claims 1-18, 20, 21, 37, 40, 47, 48 and 51 over the art of record. By the present amendment and remarks, Applicant submits that the objections and rejections have been overcome, and respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner reaffirmed the election of species restriction requirement and

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indicated that, in addition to the previously withdrawn claims, claim 52 was withdrawn. The Examiner also made the restriction requirement final. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the election of species requirement for the reasons already made of record and also submits that the species election is now moot.

Consideration of Certain IDS Documents

While the Examiner has apparently considered all of the cited prior art documents, the Examiner has not confirmed consideration of the English language translation of document No. DE 200 15 848.1. Accordingly, Applicant herein submits another copy of this document along with a form PTO-1449 listing the same for the Examiner to confirm consideration of the same.

The Examiner also noted that the USPTO file only contains a few pages of document DE 696 05 212. Applicant herein submits another copy of this document along with a form PTO-1449 listing the same for the Examiner's consideration.

Applicant again notes that copies of all previously cited documents listed on the submitted PTO-1449 forms were in fact provided to the USPTO. However, in view of the fact that the Examiner asserts that copies of the above-noted documents cannot be found in the Examiner's file, Applicant is providing another copy of these documents along with a form PTO-1449 listing the same.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner initial and sign the attached form PTO-1449 in order to indicate consideration of these documents.

The Drawing Objection is moot

The Examiner objected to the drawings on the basis of the asserted informalities noted in the for PTO-948.

While Applicant disagrees that the drawings are improper, Applicant is nevertheless submitting new "Replacement Sheet" drawing sheets which are fully compliant with the form PTO-948 attached to the instant Final Office Action.

In view of the above, Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection to the drawings and indicate that the drawings are acceptable under the Patent Office Rules.

Traversal of Claim Objection

Claims 1-18, 20, 21, 37, 40, 47, 48 and 51 were objected to on the basis of asserted informalities.

The Examiner asserted that these claims recite alternative features in a unclear manner. Applicant respectfully traverses each of the Examiner's assertions.

Applicant submits that the claims are not unclear for the reasons already made of record. Nevertheless, Applicant submits that this basis of objection is moot inasmuch as the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection of these claims.

The Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102, are moot

Over Radtke

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 1, 9, 14 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by US published patent application No. 2002/0009350 to RADTKE.

The Examiner asserted that this document discloses all the features recited in these claims including the vibration-damping ring 6 and the hollow cylinder with an outwardly extending edge 7. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a).

Over Roth

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 1, 9-15, 17, 20, 37, 47 and 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by US patent No. 5,397,112 to ROTH et al.

The Examiner asserted that this document discloses all the features recited in these claims including the vibration-damping ring 16 and the hollow cylinder with an outwardly extending edge 14. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

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Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Traversal of Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Over Roth alone

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 15, 16, 18 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over ROTH alone.

The Examiner asserted that ROTH teaches all of the claimed features except for the recited attachment of the vibration-damping ring to the hollow cylinder member and a hollow cylinder member made of spring steel. However, the Examiner asserts that ROTH teaches attachment by friction locking and that it would have been obvious to modify this attachment to use the recited attachment in place of the disclosed mechanical attachment. The Examiner also asserts that the selection of the material for the hollow cylinder member is within the ordinary skill level of one having ordinary skill in the art. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and the Examiner's assertions.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

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Over Radtke alone

Applicant traverses the rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RADTKE alone.

The Examiner asserted that RADTKE teaches all of the claimed features except for the vibration-damping ring made of rubber or an elastomeric material. However, the Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to use such material because the selection of the material is within the ordinary skill level of one having ordinary skill in the art. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and the Examiner's assertions.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Over Roth with Bondarowicz

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over ROTH in view of US published patent application No. 2002/0009351 to BONDAROWICZ et al.

The Examiner asserted that ROTH teaches all of the claimed features except for the recited resilient retaining members. However, the Examiner asserts that BONDAROWICZ teaches this feature and that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of these documents. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and the Examiner's assertions.

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While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Over Radtke with Bondarowicz

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RADTKE in view of US published patent application No. 2002/0009351 to BONDAROWICZ et al.

The Examiner asserted that RADTKE teaches all of the claimed features except for the recited resilient retaining members. However, the Examiner asserts that BONDAROWICZ teaches this feature and that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of these documents. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and the Examiner's assertions.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

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Over Radtke with Hein

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 4-8, 10-12 and 51 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over RADTKE in view of US patent No. 5,261,650 to HEIN.

The Examiner asserted that RADTKE teaches all of the claimed features except for the recited retaining groove and the recited retaining ring. However, the Examiner asserts that HEIN teaches these features and that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of these documents. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and the Examiner's assertions.

While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Over Roth with Hein

Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 4-8, 40 and 51 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over ROTH in view of HEIN.

The Examiner asserted that ROTH teaches all of the claimed features except for the recited retaining groove and the recited retaining ring. However, the Examiner asserts that HEIN teaches these features and that it would have been obvious to combine the teachings of these documents. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and the Examiner's assertions.

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While Applicant disagrees with this rejection for the reasons already made of record, Applicant submits that this rejection is moot because the above-noted claims have been canceled.

Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the above-noted claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

New Claims are also Allowable

Applicant submits that new claims 53-60 are allowable over the applied art of record. Specifically, claim 53-60 recite a combination of features which are clearly not disclosed or suggested by the applied art of record.

For example, RADTKE does not disclose or suggest, among other things, a vibration-damping ring comprising a through opening, a first annular projecting portion, and a second annular projecting portion, the first and second annular projecting portions extending respectively beyond the first and second ends of the hollow cylinder member and/or a vibration-damping material permanently connected or non-removably fixed to the annular surface of the second end. Instead, RADTKE discloses cylindrical retaining or damping elements 6 or 29. Applicant notes, in particular, that paragraph [0032] of RADTKE merely indicates that the element 29 "is provided between the flange 7 and the component 27."

With regard to ROTH, while Applicant acknowledges that Fig. 2 of ROTH disclose a hollow cylinder member 12 having an outwardly extending edge 14 and that an elastically deformable member 16 having an outer surface is coupled to an inner surface of the hollow

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cylinder member 12, it is apparent from a fair reading of the disclosure that ROTH does not disclose, or even suggest, a vibration-damping material permanently connected or non-removably fixed to the annular surface of the second end. Applicant notes, in particular, that Fig. 2 of ROTH shows no such material attached, or even arranged, on the annular surface of the flange 14.

Additionally, while Applicant acknowledges that Figs. 1 and 2 of BONDAROWICZ disclose a hollow cylinder member 14 having an outwardly extending edge 14 and resilient retaining members 30, it is apparent from a fair reading of the disclosure that BONDAROWICZ also does not disclose or suggest a vibration-damping material permanently connected or non-removably fixed to the annular surface of the second end. Applicant notes, in particular, that Fig. 2 of BONDAROWICZ shows no such material attached, or even arranged, on the flange 14.

Finally, while Applicant acknowledges that Fig. 1 of HEIN shows a device having a groove within which a retaining ring 33 is disposed, it is apparent from a fair reading of the disclosure that HEIN also does not disclose or suggest a vibration-damping material permanently connected or non-removably fixed to the annular surface of the second end. Applicant notes, in particular, that Fig. 1 of HEIN shows no such hollow cylinder member, much less, a material attached to an annular surface of one of the outwardly extending edge and the outwardly extending edge segments.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that none of the documents of record individually anticipate or render unpatentable the instant invention, and that no proper combination of the applied documents renders the combination of features recited in new

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claims 53-60 obvious.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests consideration of these claims and further request that the above-noted claims be indicated as being allowable.

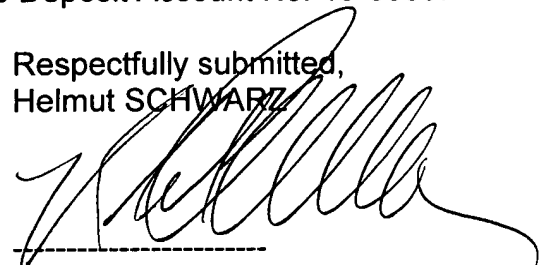
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that none of the references of record, either taken alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious the Applicant's invention, as recited in each of the pending claims. The applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to refund excess payments and charge any additional fee necessary to have this paper entered to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Respectfully submitted,
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